

Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica: Measures in the energy sector should restrict Russia's capacity to make war

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News



On 20 September 2022, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, participated in the meeting of the General Affairs Council of the European Union (EU) in Brussels. The Council focused on providing the required assistance to Ukraine, on measures to reduce energy crisis, and on recommendations from the Conference on the Future of Europe.

At the meeting, the Czech presidency presented its priorities for its term of office in the Council of the European Union, the main one being the management of the Ukrainian refugee crisis and Ukraine's reconstruction. The participants had an in-depth discussion on preparations for the European Council meeting on 20-21 October, with a special emphasis on providing political, military and financial support for Ukraine and taking concrete measures to fight the energy crisis.

"A rapid advancement of proposals concerning the energy sector is needed in the EU Council. At the same time, energy-related measures should also restrict Russia's capacity to make war," the Parliamentary Secretary said.

Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica underlined that in addition to the need for increasing political and economic pressure on Russia, active work must be done to prepare and approve the eighth package of sanctions against Russia.

"Russia must be brought to account for war crimes it has perpetrated," Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica said, "and we must ensure that the aggressor pays for rebuilding Ukraine, we must find a legal solution at the EU level making it possible to confiscate Russia's frozen assets and channel them into rebuilding Ukraine."

The Parliamentary Secretary noted that the establishment of an EU Military Training Mission in support of Ukraine would be the right step to take. In a discussion on the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe, Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica underlined that, under the conditions of war waged by Russia on Ukraine, there was special need to strengthen the EU's unity. "The

Conference on the Future of Europe was critically important in terms of promoting people's involvement in the EU's decision-making process. A regular feedback and clear communication are of key importance to demonstrate progress in addressing challenges and priorities identified by citizens," the Parliamentary Secretary said.

In conclusion of the discussion, the Czech presidency informed the Council that on 2 December an event would be organised for citizens' representatives to the Conference on the Future of Europe in order to assess results and discuss the way forward.

In an exchange of views on a possible transition to qualified majority voting in the Council, the Parliamentary Secretary said: "Overall, we are sceptical that the use of qualified majority in the Council, especially concerning foreign policy and security policy, would strengthen the unity among the Member States. Qualified majority voting in matters so important can create a situation when the EU is taking speedy decisions but it is not effective in putting them into practice."

At the meeting, the European Commission introduced the Member States to its third annual Rule of Law Report, which examines developments across the Member States. Discussions on issues covered by the report and its recommendations will continue in the following Council meetings.

Background information

The meetings of the General Affairs Council are held once a month. In the second half of 2022, the meetings of the General Affairs Council are chaired by the Czech Republic, which currently holds the presidency of the Council of the EU.

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